

Lee Township
Special Meeting
February 17, 2024

The Special Meeting of the Lee Township Board was called to order at 10:00 am at the Lee Township Fire Department located at 5415 109th Ave, Pullman Michigan.

Members Present: Clerk Friel, Supervisor Owen, Treasurer Godlew, Trustee Hatfield, Trustee Galdikas.

The purpose of the meeting to discuss the Fire Chief and full-time fire fighter positions and approve assessing documents.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Supervisor Owen.

Supervisor Owen informed that Lee Township has had a fire department for over 100 years, and that about 5 years ago, discussion began about hiring a full-time firefighter to cover the day shift at the department. Resulting in implementation of the position a couple years ago. It was reported that the position has been beneficial during that time, and the board is very satisfied with the results.

Discussion continued to cover the process to transition Current Fire Chief Chamberlain from full-time Chief, to part-time Chief, and how to fill the gap in coverage this will leave for the department.

Chief Chamberlain spoke of all his duties as Fire Chief, and stated that his current hours are 5 am to 1 pm, for a total of 40 hours a week. He continued to propose an option to hire a full-time firefighter, and allow for a part-time chief position. The primary focus of the full-time position would be to cover the day shift with a qualified person. He informed that his former employer had contacted him multiple times to return to his previous job, and called with an offer that he could not turn down. He had been working 2nd shift in his new position while covering the fire department from 5am-1pm. He stated how unrealistic it was for him to continue working both positions as he had since December. He stated that he would like to continue as Fire Chief, but as a part time position, which would leave the need for coverage in the full-time firefighter position.

As he works to transition out of the chief position, Chief Chamberlain continued that he has candidates in mind for the part-time chief and full-time firefighter positions. He suggested hiring Zack Clark on as the Fire Chief in a part-time position, and hiring Andrew Cadwell in the full-time position of firefighter. He explained that Clark would not be interested in covering the FT position due to having a current FT job. He continued by stating both candidates are interested in the positions.

Trustee Galdikas spoke about the work put into creating the full-time chief position. She reminded that the board could potentially be filled with all new representatives ever 4 years of the election cycle, and the potential to lose ground on the work put into the creation of the

position. She voiced concerns of a new hire disliking the position and it flipping again 6 months from now. To which Chief Chamberlain stated the unknown will always be a risk.

Many volunteers on the department were in attendance for the meeting who voiced their support for the plan expressed by Chief Chamberlain. Mitch Gibson suggested discussing with Columbia Township who dealt with a similar situation. He continued that Chief Chamberlain is loved by the department and Township, voicing concerns with hiring outside the department. He raised concerns of keeping within the budget if a full-time chief were hired outside the department. He also raised concerns about the potential loss of firefighters by going against the requested plan. Chief Chamberlain requested he transition to part-time chief until Clark completes his training for the chief position. Which would allow for the full-time position to be covered by firefighter/EMS personnel. He explained that he would remain helpful, and believes in the gameplan put together by himself and the department.

Dan Ciokiewicz spoke about the status of full-time being less meaningful as the chief puts in the same amount of time in the position regardless of full-time status. He stated that he believes it would be wise to split the positions based on this fact.

Chief Chamberlain requests to hire Andrew Cadwell as the full-time firefighter, covering the 5 am- 1 pm shift. He asked to adjust the chief position to part-time, and adjust the wage accordingly, splitting the wage between himself and Zack Clark, transitioning to paying the full wage to Clark when his training is complete. He hoped to stay on to help the transition go smoothly. He explained that Sam Kasinger will continue in the part time firefighter position, until she decides to retire.

Chief Chamberlain praised the department for their commitment to not only the department, but also the community, regardless of financial compensation, stating that Lee Township wages are less than other local departments. Many members of the department spoke in support of Chief Chamberlain's suggested plan.

The board received the recommendation presented by Chief Chamberlain and the department. The board discussed the compensation breakdown for the two proposed positions. Explaining that Chief Chamberlain currently received a salary of \$53,040 annually. Chief Chamberlain requested that the part-time chief position receive \$800 per month, split between himself and Clark, and the full-time position be paid \$20 per hour or \$38,400 annually, with 2 weeks paid vacation and a \$500 uniform allowance.

Zack Clark expressed his interest in the chief position. He explained that he would be available during evenings, due to his current full-time job.

Andrew Cadwell voiced his interest in the full-time position, expressing immediate availability.

Chief Chamberlain requested that Cadwell be hired immediately, and that he would stay on to train for a couple weeks.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Hatfield to approve compensation of \$20/hour, with 2 weeks paid vacation and \$500 annual uniform allowance for Andrew Cadwell in the full-time firefighter position, to begin February 23, 2024.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Galdikas to approve the full-time Fire Chief, Ted Chamberlain to transition to part-time with an annual wage of \$8,000, and to split the wage between current Chief Chamberlain and Interim Fire Chief, Zack Clark. Roll call vote taken, Yes- Hatfield, Galdikas, Godlew, Owen, Friel. Motion carried.

Supervisor Owen presented the land division, property line transfers and lot line adjustments form. The board suggested corrections to be made.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Godlew to approve the resolution for land division, property line transfer and lot line adjustment. All voted "Aye". Motion carried.

Supervisor Owen presented the request to combine parcel form. The board suggested corrections.

A motion was made by Owen and Seconded by Godlew to strike "Joel and phone number", "Allegan County approval line", add lines for Owner's email and mailing address, indicate an area on the form for assessor use only and update the form approval date to state 2-17-2024 at the bottom of the form. All voted "Aye". Motion carried.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Galdikas to remove the land division application routing sheet from the land division packet. All voted "Aye". Motion carried.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Hatfield to update the land division application and remove #5, expediting handling request, and to update the form approval date, to appear on the last page as 2-17-2024. All voted "Aye". Motion carried.

Motion was made by Owen and seconded by Friel to adjourn the meeting at 11:50 am. All voted "Aye". Motion Carried.

Minutes Submitted by:
Heather Friel, Clerk